



April/May 2004

# World's Largest Constructed Wetland

*Dedication marks milestone in Everglades restoration*



A vast sea of vegetation and water is what a stormwater treatment area looks like. Cattail, hyacinth and other native plants remove excess nutrients from these slow-moving waters, cleansing them before they flow south into the Everglades.

### PUTTING PLANTS TO WORK

That is exactly what an Everglades stormwater treatment area is designed to do. Planted with select, native vegetation, such as cattail, hyacinth and even tiny algae, this particular STA can remove more than 40 metric tons of phosphorus from water before it flows into the Everglades.

Why phosphorus? Although it is a vital part of all natural systems, phosphorus is also a fertilizer component. It flows across the landscape in stormwater runoff, harming natural areas by promoting algae growth and an overabundance of undesirable plants. These “undesirables” alter wetland

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Under vivid blue skies, mild February sunshine and with more than a hundred attendees, the South Florida Water Management District dedicated the world's largest constructed wetland, Stormwater Treatment Area 3/4.

This 26-square-mile treatment marsh, located on the Broward-Palm Beach County line south of South Bay, is part of an ongoing District effort to clean pollutants from water flowing south into the Everglades. Natural vegetation in the

wetland removes excess nutrients from stormwater runoff before it enters the Everglades ecosystem.

Local, state and federal officials took part in the February 23 celebration. David Struhs, then-Secretary of the Florida Department of Environment Protection, called the project “a marvel of perseverance and dedicated public management. It marries the ingenuity of human engineering with the ability of nature to heal itself.”

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